

The Damascus Connection of Montgomery County Maryland

Warren Fleming
Testimony



TO
Park and Planning Commission
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Park and Planning Commission

My name is **Warren Fleming** and I'm a Prior Commissioner for Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission. I'm also a relative of the Holsey Family that once thrived on Holsey Road. The historic significance of Holsey Road is a cow path that was once used to access the Mullinax Plantation. After the **Emancipation Proclamation** was executed, the slaves from the **Mullinax Plantation** were placed on **Holsey Road**. **The name Holsey came from John Holsey who was the slave and overseer.**

Please be advised that my testimony today isn't about the historic significance of Holsey Road, but to inform the Councilmembers of the safety and preservation risks to be considered if this road is classified as Rustic. Please be advised that many of the residents and the Holsey Family aren't in favor of the **Rustic Road Reclassification as well.**

Safely

The classification of Rustic Rual Roads limits the upgrades that this road needs. The road is highly utilized with Amazon Trucks, special delivery Trucks, UPS Trucks, visitors, and maintenance crew accessing the horse farm located at the end of Holsey Road, business office at the entry of 27 and Holsey Road, The Holsey Family gathering at Harvey Zeigler estate along with the members of the Damascus Connections Committee meeting in which I'm the President just to name a few. There are about thirty new families that has moved on Holsey Road and many of these families has kids.

The main problem I foresee with all the traffic is in the case of a fire. The fire truck will not have enough room to enter and return if other motorists are in the area at the same time. Since there are no Fire Hydrants, the trucks will have a hard time leaving and returning since the road is so narrow. Another risk is the steep curves on a one lane road that don't allow a motorist to see around the corner. We have a huge problem with snow removal when the county plows the snow and leaves the plowed snow along the streets, this causes runoff during the melting process. There is no proper water runoff nor streetlights. Please be advised that Holsey Road currently doesn't have a quote unquote street classification.

Preservation

As a prior Commissioner for Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission is to understand the urgency of identifying and preserving Montgomery County historic treasures. In all cases, once a site has been identified as Historic, renovations and upgrades are conducted to bring these sites up to code. In the case of Holsey Road, we cannot afford to downplay or whitewash the historic significance this site brings to Montgomery County and the State of Maryland. I'm currently working with the State of Maryland to put a Historic Marker on 27 that will identify the historic significance of Holsey Road.

I'm working with Park and Planning on installing a Historic Marker between Harvey Zeigler home and his sister home on Holsey Road. The embarrassment my committee has suffered due to previous county council members putting a stop to my committee's Historic Marker Installation Project because we used the terms Negro and Colored to describe African American history. I'm currently working with Park and Planning and the Office of Human Rights to restore this project and also working with the Holsey Family, and the Damascus Heritage Society in writing a book about Holsey Road and the Mullinnix Plantation.

The Damascus Heritage Society Museum hosts the historical significance of Damascus each month and for the month of November 2022, we are highlighting Holsey Road. I hope each of you will come out and see and hear the history of Holsey Road. As some of you know that I have been a soldier for Civil Rights and Humanitarian services for many years in Montgomery County and around the State of Maryland. Some of my accomplishments are as follow:

- Spearheaded the initial efforts with my uncle Harvey Zeigler to install a community organization called "**The Damascus Heritage Society**" in which we installed and operated a successful museum for the artifacts of Damascus Maryland. This organization was formed to allow the Black and White residents of Damascus Maryland to come together for a common goal and work together in unity.
- Support Park and Planning and the Council in lobbying for the initial funding for the implementation, preservation and renovation of the Rily Plantation and the construction of the Josiah Henson Museum.
- Worked with Park and Planning and the County Council in identifying over 100 historic African American Sites in Montgomery County.

Warren Fleming

President The Damascus Connection Committee and Prior Commissioner for Park and Planning Historic Preservation Commission